

The Asia Foundation

Legal Accountability and Dispute Resolution (LADR) Program (Grant Agreement No. 492-G-00-98-00032-00)

July 1, 2003 - December 31, 2003

Summary

This semi-annual report covers activities from July 2003 to December 2003 under the Legal Accountability and Dispute Resolution (LADR) program, which is part of the U.S. Agency for International Development's \$ 3,070,358 grant support for The Asia Foundation from September 14, 1998 to September 30, 2005. This program aims to promote alternative dispute resolution processes within and outside the formal judicial system, ensure transparency and accountability in the judiciary, build stable constituency for judicial reform, and strengthen public information to increase transparency and improve access to justice. Drawing on its long-standing partnerships with the courts, lawyers' groups and other Philippine stakeholders in addressing important legal and judicial reform issues, The Asia Foundation implements this program through four major components, namely: (1) institutionalizing alternative dispute resolution processes; (2) ensuring judicial transparency and accountability; (3) building constituency for reforms; and (4) strengthening public information and access to justice.

The Asia Foundation submitted a copy of the LADR Semi-Annual Report covering the period from January 2003 to June 2003 to the Development Experience Clearinghouse on November 28, 2003, as instructed under the Office of Regional Procurement (ORP) No. 18 dated August 19, 2003 and ORP No. 20 dated February 2, 2004.

Between July 2003 and December 2003, The Asia Foundation continued to work with its partner institutions to implement projects that promote alternative dispute resolution processes within and outside the formal judicial system as a means to decongest court dockets, and on projects to ensure transparency and accountability in the judiciary. With the approval of the program expansion in August 2003, the Foundation began to embark on new initiatives that aim at building stable constituencies for reform and strengthening public information to increase transparency and access to justice.

Initiatives on alternative dispute resolution (ADR) processes were undertaken during this period primarily through partnerships with the Conflict Resolution Group, in collaboration with the Department of Justice, on the development and use of mediation by prosecutors and public attorneys; and the Cyberspace Policy Center for Asia Pacific on its on-line dispute resolution project in the areas of franchise, e-commerce, and consumer-related disputes. Apart from these grant activities, The Asia Foundation organized roundtable discussions that brought together current and potential partners in ADR to discuss respective initiatives, share useful experiences, and collaboratively work towards the promotion of ADR in the country.

Efforts to support judicial transparency and accountability were pursued during this period by providing support to the Social Weather Stations to implement a survey on the state of the judiciary and the legal profession. In collaboration with the Asian Development Bank, the Program Management Office of the Supreme Court, and the Philippine Judicial Academy, The Asia Foundation further supported education and training needs assessment workshops for judges and judicial educators.

To build constituency for the judicial reforms, the Foundation partnered with the Supreme Court's Program Management Office to facilitate dialogues between the judiciary and the business sector to deepen their respective insights on the role and reform efforts of the judiciary, as well as the concerns of business regarding the administration of justice in the country.

Finally, efforts to strengthen public information to increase transparency and access to justice were undertaken through a partnership with the Al-Mujadilah Development Foundation on its initiative to popularize the Code of Muslim Personal Laws in the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao and to gain an understanding of the different perspectives about the Shari'ah. The Asia Foundation has also forged a partnership with the Integrated Bar of the Philippines on its jail decongestion project.

During the period covered by this report, The Asia Foundation has awarded ten new grants to eight partners focusing on legal accountability and dispute resolution. Of the eleven grants issued in the preceding period, three are still ongoing and the rest were completed as of December 2003.

Summary of Significant Activities and Outcomes of the Period

Towards the Institutionalization of Alternative Dispute Resolution Processes

Family Business Alternative Dispute Resolution. The Cebu Mediation Foundation completed during this period the three-day Conflict Management Seminar-Workshop and the three-month Mediation Clinic for Family Businesses in Cebu City. The activity equipped participants, composed of entrepreneurs, executive officers, and owners of family businesses in Cebu, with substantive knowledge and practical skills on communication, negotiation, and mediation for possible use in managing conflicts involving family businesses. They were also given the opportunity to volunteer to have their conflicts resolved through a formal mediation process during the mediation clinic. As a result of the lessons learned from the program, the participating companies were asked to consolidate their individual program outputs in the form of concrete written policies on mediation which they committed to implement.

Evaluation of Court-Referred Mediation, Refresher Courses for Mediators, and Production of Mediation Video. Expected to have commenced in July 2003, the Philippine Judicial Academy (PhilJA) experienced project delays during this period due

to the events surrounding the impeachment of the Supreme Court Chief Justice and the effects of the new procurement legislation on bidding for services required under the project. Nonetheless, the PhilJA was able to hold the refresher course for the accredited mediators in September 2003 and has finished writing the scripts for the mediation video that will be used for its training activities. The evaluation component of this project was also modified in December 2003 through the expert assistance of the Social Weather Stations, which will assist in finalizing the survey questionnaire, conducting the focus group discussion on the design of the survey questionnaire, carrying out of mail survey as well as on-site surveys with judges, lawyers, mediators, and parties who have experienced court-referred mediation, and in generating the survey report. The mediation video and the evaluation components are now expected to be completed in March and July 2004, respectively.

Expansion of the Department of Justice's Mediation Project. Building on the gains of the mediation project piloted by The Asia Foundation with the Department of Justice in 2001, this grant supported the initiative of the Conflict Resolution Group to expand the development and use of mediation by prosecutors and public attorneys. This is being undertaken in coordination with the Department of Justice through training and internships in areas with the largest case loads, namely, Metro Manila, Baguio City, Bacolod City and Davao City. As of December 2003, the Conflict Resolution Group and the Department of Justice have met with the Chief of the Public Attorney's Office to arrange the participation of PAO lawyers in the program. Training topics and supervision assignments for the internship component have also been finalized. As preparations are now complete, the training is set to begin in early 2004.

Participants in the training would be given the opportunity to mediate actual cases during the internship period and document their respective experiences in mediation. These activities will aid in the institutionalization of mediation in the Department of Justice to complement past and current efforts on court-referred mediation.

Online Dispute Resolution Project. An initiative of the Cyberspace Policy Center for Asia Pacific, this project seeks to develop and apply in the Philippine setting the complementary concepts of "multi-door courthouse" and "online dispute resolution (ODR)" in the areas of franchise, e-commerce, and consumer-related disputes.¹ Support was given to implement the program design phase of the project. Start-up activities include the process mapping of the "multi-door courthouse," which involves the resolution of key issues pertaining to the legal instruments necessary to run the system, communication linkages among the disputants, courts and the ADR service providers; and system design and software development, which is being undertaken in partnership with Microsoft Corporation. Consultation sessions with concerned industry groups and

¹ "Multi-door courthouse" is an alternative dispute resolution concept that envisions a large "courthouse" with multiple ADR "doors" or processes of referral to an appropriate dispute resolution process, which includes conciliation, mediation, arbitration, and social services. "Online dispute resolution" (ODR), on the other hand, specifically utilizes the Internet and related technologies to resolve disputes, or at least assist in their resolution.

relevant government agencies, including the judiciary; and capacity-building initiatives were also held to help develop a resource pool for the service. By June 2004, it is expected that recommendations will be generated to implement a one-year pilot phase in selected urban centers for the use of ODR in the identified disputes. In the event that consultation sessions with the judiciary will result into the adoption of internet technology to implement the Supreme Court's court-referred mediation initiative, the "multi-door courthouse" concept is considered as likewise applied alongside the use of ODR.

During this reporting period, Cyberspace Policy Center made progress in firming up its technical services arrangement with Microsoft and has so far engaged the consultants who are presently undertaking the process-mapping component of the project. Meetings have also been held separately with the concerned industries, specifically the Philippine Franchise Association, Philippine Retailers' Association, and the Philippine Internet Commerce Society for their involvement in the project. In early 2004, the Center is expected to convene a National Forum on ODR and to commence its consultation seminars with industry and government.

Engendering the Barangay Justice System: Feminist Legal Action Research. Though the Supreme Court recognizes the importance of the barangay justice system in widening people's access to justice and the use of alternative dispute resolution in facilitating justice, the Women's Legal Bureau noted that current initiatives to improve the barangay justice system must give more attention to the gender aspects of community justice processes. The Foundation provided a grant to the Bureau to set the groundwork for a larger initiative to address gender issues in the barangay justice system by looking at how the system addresses gender-based crimes in a community in Metro Manila. In its data gathering activities, the project will further identify relevant ADR experiences of legal professionals and paralegals in the community, and will look into how ADR strategies impact on women. An output of this project will be a baseline report on gender and the barangay justice system.

All of the data gathering activities that were begun in July 2003, which included three focus group discussions, four community education sessions, and a legal aid clinic, have been completed by the end of this period. Validation and presentation of the findings are scheduled to occur over the next two months.

Roundtable Discussions on Alternative Dispute Resolution. During this reporting period, two roundtable discussions were organized by The Asia Foundation to gather its current and potential partners in ADR, namely the Philippine Judicial Academy and the Philippine Mediation Foundation for court-referred mediation; the Conflict Resolution Group, Cebu Mediation Foundation, Cyberspace Policy Center for Asia and the Pacific for ADR in business, the Department of Justice for ADR in quasi-judicial bodies; and the Mediators' Network for Sustainable Peace and Women's Legal Bureau for community-based mediation. The first roundtable discussion on December 3, 2003, gave the partners an opportunity to meet for the first time and discuss ADR initiatives to ensure that there

is no duplication of work and to maximize impacts of the projects. It enabled the participants to obtain a clearer view of the ADR landscape by identifying gaps which can be used for future programming purposes. The second roundtable convened on December 15, 2003, provided the venue for learning about the development of ADR in the United States. Professor Marshall Breger, the 2003-2004 Fulbright-Syncip Distinguished Lecturer and a Professor of Law at the Columbus School of Law, The Catholic University of America, was invited to share his experiences on this topic. A total of fifteen participants attended each roundtable discussion.

By the end of the two roundtables, the participants agreed to hold a national conference workshop to gather various ADR groups throughout the country to discuss major issues, such as the regulation of the practice of mediation and the promotion of ADR in the country. An Ad Hoc Committee, composed of representatives from the Conflict Resolution Group, the Cebu Mediation Foundation, Inc., the Cyberspace Policy Center for the Asia Pacific, the Mediators Network, the Women's Legal Bureau and the Philippine Mediation Foundation, Inc., was formed to prepare for this event.

The Second Roundtable Discussion on Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR)

On December 15, The Asia Foundation organized its second roundtable discussion on Alternative Dispute Resolution. Fulbright-Syncip Distinguished Lecturer Marshall Breger was invited to share experiences and discuss the development of ADR in the United States. He explained that with the enactment of the Negotiated Rule-Making Act, every government agency was required to have an ADR officer and an ADR plan. The Act instituted the setting up of a mediation fund, job evaluation, and descriptions for government litigators and mediators, and the creation of a panel where mediators offer transparent information about their qualifications. Questions raised by the participants relate to the importance of mediators having law backgrounds, the role of lawyers in mediation, differences of private and government mediators, and the effectiveness of retired judges as mediators. The discussion proved to be very informative and Professor Breger's insights cultivated new ideas for the promotion of ADR in the Philippines. These roundtable discussions are part of The Asia Foundation's efforts, under the USAID-funded Legal Accountability and Dispute Resolution Program, to help promote ADR in the country.

Judicial Transparency and Accountability

Survey of the Judiciary and the Legal Profession. This grant takes cue from 1993-1996 Foundation-sponsored surveys conducted by the Social Weather Stations of the opinions and attitudes of judges and of lawyers (the results of which were published in a monograph entitled "Monitoring the State of the Judiciary and the Legal Profession"). Within the context of the current judicial reform program, a replication of the survey is being implemented by the Social Weather Stations to find out if there have been changes in attitudes and opinions on the state of the judiciary and the legal profession, particularly on the administration of justice and judicial problems and solutions. Survey activities will include focus group discussions with government, private, and public interest lawyers as well as lower court judges; a mail survey of lower court judges, including

those of the Shari'ah Courts; and face-to-face interviews with randomly selected private lawyers. Survey results will be presented to the judiciary and the legal profession for consideration in the ongoing judicial reform program of the Supreme Court.

Earlier in 2003, the Foundation supported the Social Weather Stations' Public Opinion Survey on the Courts to know the general public's perception of the justice system in the country. The nationwide survey, which includes the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao, was part of a cross-country effort on the justice system. Results of the survey were presented to the Asian Development Bank symposium on Judicial Independence in August 2003, and to the Supreme Court in September 2003.

Eight focus group discussions were held in this reporting period. Most of the respondents for the survey of lawyers have also been interviewed and a significant number of the judges who were sent the mail-in survey questionnaires have already responded.

Education and Training Needs Assessment Workshops for Judges and Judicial Educators. To more effectively carry out its mandate as a training school for justices, judges, court personnel, lawyers, and aspirants to judicial posts, the Philippine Judicial Academy (PhilJA) was given a grant by the Foundation to train its ranks in assessing the education and training needs of its intended beneficiaries. The two needs assessment workshops, participated by PhilJA training specialists and staff attorneys, and judicial education point persons and selected judges from the judicial regions of the country, were held in Manila and Cebu City in August 2003. Results of the workshops will be considered in the planning and implementation of PhilJA's judicial education programs and will provide input to the Asian Development Bank's Technical Assistance on "Strengthening the Independence and Defining the Accountability of the Judiciary," particularly in its formulation of judicial training programs that will support the judicial reform process.

eLearning Pilot Project for the Judiciary. This project was an outcome of the Philippine Judicial Academy's (PhilJA) resolve to embark on eLearning as a strategy for addressing its continuing legal and skills training needs. In June 2003, PhilJA sought the assistance of Crimson Logic, a leading application service provider in Asia Pacific that offers eLearning solutions to various sectors, to develop a framework for collaboration starting out with a pilot Continuing Professional Development portal which will enable participants to sample a representative on-line course. Marriage Annulment and E-Commerce have been identified as the judicial courses. During this period, Crimson Logic, with substantive input from PhilJA, finished the development of the eLearning module which was subsequently reviewed by PhilJA. The proponents are currently undertaking final revisions of the module and are in the process of identifying the pilot areas. Actual pilot testing is scheduled to commence in April 2004.

Court Monitoring. Support was provided to Paglilingkod Batas Pangkapatiran Foundation in April 2003 to facilitate the participation of the civil society in court reform initiatives through informed and purposive monitoring of courts located in three cities in

Mindanao, namely Davao, Cagayan de Oro and General Santos. As of this reporting period, a monitoring tool was drafted and is currently being reviewed by the project's advisory committee. A final design and planning workshop for court monitors was conducted in preparation for the first training scheduled in January 2004. Recruitment of at least thirty court monitors is also being undertaken.

Building Constituency for Reforms

Chamber to Chamber: Dialogues Between the Judiciary and the Business Sector. The Asia Foundation provided support to the Supreme Court in its effort to increase transparency in the judiciary and to open its communication lines with the business sector, a sector that has traditionally had contentious relations with the judiciary. Led by the Program Management Office of the Supreme Court, this grant will facilitate the conduct of dialogues between the judiciary and the business sector, primarily representatives of foreign and local business chambers, clubs, and associations, in order to deepen their respective insights on the judiciary's role and its reform agenda as well as the business sector's concerns regarding the administration of justice in the Philippines. The dialogues, which will provide the venue for the beneficial exchange of judgments, opinions, and beliefs on the inter-relationship between the business sector and the judiciary, will take place in different judicial regions in the country. During this reporting period, the inaugural meeting was held with thirty attendees from both sectors in Makati City.

Chamber to Chamber: Dialogues Between the Judiciary and the Business Sector

The very first of a series of dialogues, members of the business community and the Supreme Court sat down together last November 20, 2003 at the Dusit Hotel Nikko, Makati for a exchange of opinions and concerns on the inter-relationship between the judiciary and the business sector. The business sector, represented among others by the Japanese, the European, and the Philippine Chambers of Commerce, called attention to persistent issues such as the congestion of court dockets, arbitrary issuance of temporary restraining orders (TROs), court decisions that reveal prejudice against employers on labor cases based on humanitarian reasons, lack of transparency of the Supreme Court on its decisions and discipline of its ranks, and the lack of promotion of the interlinkages between law and economics in light of the information and technological advances in society. The business sector has also begun to acknowledge the value of mediation in settling business disputes, further suggesting its mandatory application in courts. In response to these issues, the Supreme Court, mainly through Associate Justice Artemio Panganiban, emphasized the independence of each member of the Court and the Court as a branch of government. He described the judiciary's efforts to improve the current system, such as allowing presentation of evidence before the clerk of the court, disciplining judges through dismissals, and exploring compulsory arbitration of disputes. The Supreme Court, through its Program Management Office, will be holding dialogues in ten (10) different cities in the course of six months to continue to gather the concerns of the business sector and deepen their insights on the judiciary's reform agenda. The project is made possible through the assistance of the USAID-funded Legal Accountability and Dispute Resolution Program of The Asia Foundation

Popularization of the Code of Muslim Personal Laws in the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) (Phase II) and Conduct of Focus Group Discussions with Shari'ah Court Judges, Lawyers, and Muslim Communities on the Shari'ah. Seeking to expand its past initiatives, the Al-Mujadilah Development Foundation will primarily utilize this grant to popularize the Code of Muslim Personal Laws² in five areas of the ARMM, namely, Marawi City, Bongao (Taw-Tawi), Lamitan (Basilan), Jolo (Sulu), and Sultan Kudarat (Maguindanao). This will be undertaken through the conduct of community-based education sessions for women leaders in non-governmental and people's organizations, government, and multi-sectoral groups in different areas, and publication of primers on the Code in local languages. Al-Mujadilah Foundation will further use this grant to obtain an understanding of the perspectives and attitudes of Muslim communities, including Shari'ah court judges and lawyers, about the Shari'ah, its significance, and its appropriate role in their lives. Focus group discussions with Muslim communities and needs assessment workshops for Shari'ah court judges and lawyers in three areas of the ARMM will be organized.

As of this reporting period, final drafts of the translations of the Code of Muslim Personal Laws in Samal and Maguindanao languages, and illustrated primers of the Code in five local languages (Tausug, Maranaw, Yakan, Sama and Maguindanaon) were being reviewed. These will be subsequently published and distributed in the five target areas of the ARMM.

Balik Laya: A Jail Decongestion Project. This grant to the Integrated Bar of the Philippines will address the problem of jail congestion that is brought about by inadequate prison facilities for the corresponding number of prisoners. Lack of representation by lawyers and shortcomings in the justice system contribute to the increase in the number of overstaying prisoners in the nation's jails. Under this grant, members of the Bar will be mobilized to train paralegals on the basic principles of criminal law and procedure and to provide legal representation for the release of overstaying prisoners in Manila and Pasay City jails. Research to determine the status of overstaying prisoners and who are qualified for release will also be undertaken under this project. As of December 31, 2003, a total of fifty-five overstaying prisoners have been released through this project.

² Presidential Decree No. 1083 (977), otherwise known as The Code of Muslim Personal Laws (CMPL), provides the rules governing the personal status, marriage and divorce, matrimonial and family relations, succession and inheritance, and property relations of spouses in Muslim communities.

Balik Laya: A Jail Decongestion Project

In an effort to address the problem of jail congestion in the country, lawyers of the Integrated Bar of the Philippines are being mobilized to train paralegals and to provide legal representation to overstaying prisoners. "Overstaying prisoners" are those who have already served the maximum penalty imposable by law for a crime for which a detainee has been accused or tried, those who have already served the maximum period of the penalty imposed by the court, and those who are qualified for parole, commutation of sentence, or pardon. At least 200 prisoners are targeted for release by the end of the project period in May 2004. This project, which was launched at the Supreme Court on November 4, 2003, is being piloted by the Integrated Bar of the Philippines in two cities - Manila and Pasay City - in close coordination with the courts in the two cities, the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology, the Board of Pardons and Parole, and the Bureau of Jail Management through support from the USAID-funded Legal Accountability and Dispute Resolution Program of The Asia Foundation.

Related Conferences

During this reporting period, the Foundation supported the participation of two Supreme Court officials from its Management and Information Systems Office to the 8th National Court Technology Conference held in Kansas City, Missouri on October 28-30, 2003. The conference was organized by the National Center for State Courts, the premier venue for court technology in the world. After the conference, one of the senior court officials proceeded to Dallas, Texas to participate in the 1st Annual International Law and Technology Forum organized by the Institute of Law and Technology of The Center for American and International Law (formerly The Southwestern Legal Foundation) on November 3-4, 2003. Participation of these court officials were considered significant as the Philippine Supreme Court embarks on several technology-related projects, such as electronic notarization, e-payment systems, e-filing or paperless filing of pleadings, case management systems, and the establishment of e-courts.

The Foundation also supported the participation of Supreme Court Justice Maria Alicia Austria-Martinez in the three-day Global Summit of Women 2003 held in Marrakech, Morocco in July 2003. The summit gathered women business and governmental leaders from around the world to exchange ideas and practices that have energized women participating in the global market. The focus of the summit was on accelerating women's economic development with an emphasis on cross-border alliances.

Plans for the Next Period

In the next reporting period, The Asia Foundation plans to pursue projects that aim to promote the use of ADR in the private sector through the various chambers of commerce and other business groups, and in environmental disputes through its partner lawyers' groups. It will undertake activities that will enhance and strengthen the working relationship of the judiciary and media to achieve a balance between transparency and

judicial confidentiality and independence. It will also assist in the establishment of mechanisms within the courts system that will facilitate prompt disposition of cases at the pre-trial stage, and outside the courts through activities that will ensure greater access to justice by local communities.

Challenges in Implementing the Program

Implementing the Legal Accountability and Dispute Resolution (LADR) program during this period was generally successful. Apart from the important projects and partnerships that have been initiated during this period, use of the in-house expertise of The Asia Foundation significantly contributed to moving this program forward. Dr. Steven Rood, the Foundation's Country Representative, is an expert on public opinion polling and has been a consultant to both government and non-governmental organizations. Atty. Carolyn Mercado, the Foundation's Senior Program Officer, is a judicial education expert who has done consulting work on the Asian Development Bank's "Strengthening the Independence of the Judiciary" and "Legal Literacy for Supporting Governance" projects. Atty. Brenda Jay Angeles-Mendoza, Program Officer on Law, worked as a legal consultant to the Philippine Department of Environment and has co-directed an ADR project where she gained experience in program management, training and mediation of environment and natural resources disputes. This in-house expertise enabled the Foundation to provide useful comments and strategic inputs to project ideas and proposals of partner institutions.

Program management during this period was considerably enhanced as the Law Unit of the Foundation began to apply monitoring schemes that enabled it to more efficiently keep track of the progress of project activities implemented by partner institutions. The hiring of an Assistant Program Officer for this program in November 2003 further allowed the Foundation to more promptly determine and respond to immediate project and program-related issues and concerns.

A major challenge that the Foundation experienced during this period was the problem of delay due to both external and internal factors in implementing project activities by some partner organizations.

With respect to Foundation projects with the judiciary, the problem of delay was primarily attributed to the proceedings and the political scenario during the October-November impeachment of Supreme Court Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr. During this time, most of the Foundation's project activities with the Supreme Court and its offices came to a temporary halt while the Court focused on the impeachment issue.

In addition, the Foundation notes that the Supreme Court had to cope with the new procurement legislation and other post-impeachment concerns that further contributed to the delay in implementing its project activities. A case in point was the "Evaluation of the Mediation Project, Refresher Course for Mediators, and Production of Mediation Video" project of the Philippine Judicial Academy (PhilJA). With the new Philippine

Procurement Law that requires the engagement of all consultants to go through a lengthy bidding procedure of several months, PhilJA was in effect prevented from promptly engaging the needed survey and video production consultants, and eventually from completing its project activities within the specified time frame.

With respect to other Foundation projects, delays were mostly due to both internal processes within the partner institution or with the work load or work style of contact persons, or due to external factors. An illustration of an externally-caused delay was the experience of the Al-Mujadilah Development Foundation in dealing with a month-long power failure in Marawi City which affected its schedule in finalizing and printing of the popularized versions of the Code of Muslim Personal Law.

Another challenge encountered by the Foundation was the extreme sensitivity of dealing with questions on judicial corruption. Particularly heightened by the impeachment proceedings, and taking into consideration the Foundation's positive rapport with the Supreme Court on its judicial reform initiatives, difficulty was experienced in mounting an anti-corruption project at this time.

The Asia Foundation realizes that it needed to adjust to the externally-caused delays that were not only unforeseen during the project's inception, but were also beyond the control of the partner institutions. The impeachment scenario, for instance, was nonetheless an appropriate event that strengthened the grounds for implementing the Foundation's program component on building constituency for the reform initiatives of the Supreme Court. Hence, project ideas such as those that seek to improve judiciary and media relations were instantly considered persuasive.

Towards the end of this reporting period, the Foundation began to address internally-caused delays by requiring partners to submit work plans and more frequent progress reports that would enable the Foundation to constantly monitor project activities and ensure timely delivery of project outputs.

As the Foundation pursues the implementation of the program in the succeeding period, it anticipates various challenges brought by the continuous surge of proposed activities from current and new partners, the upcoming national elections, and the will and priorities of the next administration. The Asia Foundation realizes that it needs to position itself to respond to such challenges and be able to make sensitive adjustments in its programming strategies.